



# The elimination of violence against women who use drugs (EVAWUD) 2020 Campaign Report

Despite strict lockdown conditions in many countries, the 2020 EVAWUD campaign was successfully conducted in several countries around the world. This report features actions held across Kenya, USA, Thailand, Spain, Indonesia, Greece, Ukraine, Portugal, Australia, Italy Myanmar and Poland

Women who use drugs are exposed to higher rates of violence than other women. This violence includes, (but is not limited to) rape, sexual harassment, extortion, loss of child custody, imprisonment for mere personal possession, extra judicial killing, capital punishment and penalisation for drug use in pregnancy. Prohibition either directly causes or greatly exacerbates conditions for all of these violations.

Gender-based violence cannot be eliminated if those most affected are not directly and meaningfully involved at all levels in relevant policy and programming.

Women who use drugs are boldly stepping out to take their place in the women's movement and efforts to stop gender-based violence. Collectively we and our allies call for governments to end the gendered, failed and murderous policy of drug prohibition.

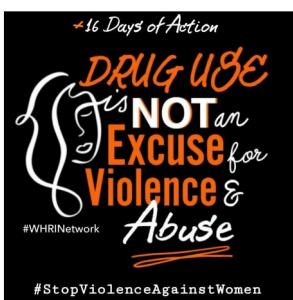
## Kenya, Women Nest



The campaign to eliminate violence against women who use drugs kicked off on 25<sup>th</sup> November with a short launch meeting with women who use drugs and a [social media](#) campaign. The meeting gave a few women a chance to give personal testimonies of gender-based violence and this was followed by a brief discussion and a photo session with placards having various violence related messages. The social media campaign focused on highlighting policy, programmatic and community gaps that increase violence against women and specifically among women who use drugs. It highlight-

ed global, country specific statistics and demands or slogans by the community of women who use drugs in Kenya. Further, this campaign presented possible strategies to prevent, mitigate or stop violence against women who use drugs.

## USA, North Carolina Survivors Union and the National Union



North Carolina Survivors Union and the National Union reprised their campaign from 2019, and will continue to do so next year as well. Last year a Facebook page was created for "16 Days of Action" a campaign by WHRIN to end acts of violence specifically against women who use drugs. The Union's page was reformatted with daily posting activities where others were asked to participate by posting different personal stories, relevant articles, graphic images, and photos personal or otherwise related. These posts were designed to spark interesting discussions and debates, even helping to change more than a few hearts and minds.

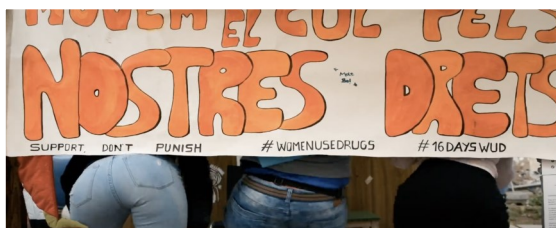
## THAILAND, Raks Thai



Raks Thai Foundation's EVAWUD campaign was organized by women who use drugs to engage in experiential sharing discussions on their daily struggles and means they use to survive violence. The women involved shared their lived experience by documenting the forms of gender-based violence they had survived, which included physical violence by police, spouses and family members or members of the public, sexual violence, psychological harassment. Participants' related experience of violence experienced at the hands of law enforcement, including other violations, as well as restrictions is seeking police assistance in other violent scenarios. The campaign T-shirt was shared to support the awareness campaign and was distributed to the women participants in Thailand. The campaign was shared on the Facebook page for 16 Days of Action to raise awareness of violence against women who use drugs.

## Spain, Metzineres

Stretched across the 16 days of activism, Metzineres held discussions to explore some of the rights that are violated against women who use drugs. In response, a calendar was created to deal with a different problem each day. The official poster of the [WUD2020](#) Campaign was published on the different social networks. An art-therapeutic [activity](#) was held, and on [MetziRadio](#) a show talked about violence against women on 27th of November. The next day, peer led feminist self-defence activity was conducted. Institutional violence is a very serious and little discussed problem so [a talk](#) was held at the end of November to explore rights if faced with police arrest. A theatre group of trans women included in their play "Are these the things we have to learn to live with?" where they addressed this issue and exposed the reality that they have to face in their daily lives.



A focus on homeless women with high costs on both physical and emotional health included graffiti painted to reflect the right to housing in a space for the people of the [Raval neighborhood](#). [Letter writing](#) to WUD in prison was completed, and a [discussion](#) with XADUD (Xarxa de Dones que Usen Drogues/ Network of women who use drugs) on the multiple impacts of the war on drugs culminated with a call for a complete reform and transformation of the current system of prohibition, reclaiming a drug policy based on human rights, gender perspective and harm reduction.

With a focus on sex worker rights, a [documentary](#) called "Vestidas de Azul" was screened and later, some peers who are sex workers talked about their experience. On human rights day a dance [video](#) called "Moving our ass for our rights" was screened. Every day there were [publications](#) on social networks with an illustration and text to explain those rights that are violated and what should be claimed.

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## Indonesia, Aksi and MEDUZA

Two organizations led in the Indonesian EVAWUD campaign – Aksi in Bogor, and Meduza in Bandung. To commemorate the 16 Days of Activism, AKSI (Aksi Keadilan Indonesia) and Womxn' Voice ran an online campaign by collaborating with a well known local comic artist, producing two comics addressing drug use among women as not an excuse to treat women inhumanely



This post was liked by more than 21 thousand people and invited various comments and discussions

The first comic released on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2020 describes a woman who uses drugs who is arrested by the police because of her drug use. Her husband, who assaulted her, makes a report to the police. When she gets to the cell, a woman also imprisoned there asked her why her face is wounded? She answers that it was her husband. The women are confused as to why the perpetrators of violence are free while the women face incarceration. This is experienced by many women, especially women who use drugs in Indonesia due to the criminalization of drug users.



The second comic was liked by 9,320 people and once again created public sphere through 122 comments

The second comic was released on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020, highlighting that there are many reasons why women decide to use drugs. It could be recreational or medical. Government should not criminalize it. The comic also shows who is more dangerous between drugs or abusive people, where abusive people leave mental health problems and prolonged trauma. Indonesian family values were used to approach the audience.

Through Womxn' Voice' Instagram accounts, people were persuaded to post visual content of their own Instagram adding some caption content to advocate for WUD rights. For example, see this extract:

*"Every December 10 is commemorated as World Human Rights Day. Ironically, to this day there are still many women who use drugs and often experience violence, stigma and discrimination from law enforcement officials, state civil servants and society...*

*Until today, we are still the target of law enforcement officers to be blackmailed, to be exploited, and turned into ATM machines.*

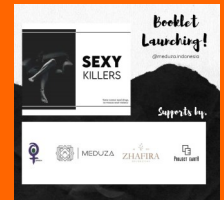
*Until today, we are still the victims of violence both domestic and public.*

*Until today, we still have difficulty in getting access to health services, and lack protection based on our needs.*

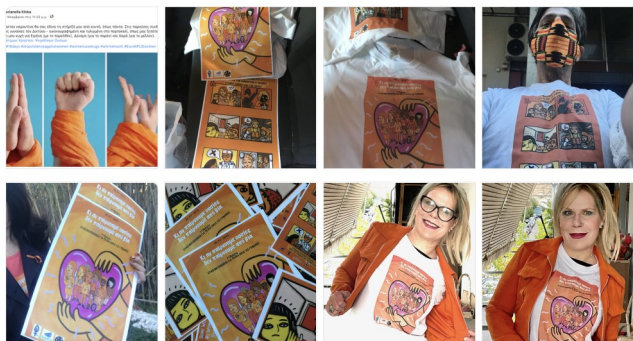
*Even today our problem is considered non-existent.*

*Do Human Rights exist for us ???"*

Meduza is a community based organization of women who use drugs. In the series of the days to eliminate violence against women, Meduza actively voiced the rights of women who use drugs with the slogan "some women need drugs, no women need violence". The series of activities included discussion related to violence against women, creating Instagram content about violence experienced by WUD, and on the final day for human rights, the launch of the stories of women who use drugs. The book contains experiences of 9 women who use drugs who survived violence, providing inspiration and allows women who use drugs to speak up and not be a hidden population.



**Greece**



PeerNUPS (the Greek drug user organisation) concentrated on an online campaign asking members and supporters to post photos with the campaign hashtags and wear something orange or our campaign t-shirt. Social media [advertising](#) went ahead with efforts made to engage the press. [Blogs](#) were also posted online. PeerNUPS street workers and street worker partners participated by distributing campaign posters and flyers and by giving campaign t-shirts to sex worker WUD in the streets along with methamphetamine and Covid flyers.

**Ukraine, NGO Club Eney**



An innovative information campaign was conducted online “Some women need drugs. No women need violence. Stop violence against women who use drugs” in Ukraine. A drawing competition was designed and implemented on the theme of violence against women who use drugs. Women sent pictures for publication on the Facebook page. All drawings were digitized and a deck of cards were created for use in counselling and helping women who use drugs. 38 pictures from women who use drugs were collected. Each work is unique, because behind each of them is the story of human life.

Results of the campaign were presented on Facebook with the international campaign tags. These pictures will change lives when they become a deck of cards. In memory of this competition, we made a separate [album](#), where all the pictures are found together. The campaign was fully developed and led by women who use drugs.

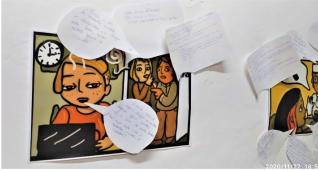
**Australia, Sydney MISC**



Sydney's Medically Supervised Injecting Centre took part in this year's Orange the World with a focus on women who use drugs campaign on the 25th November 2020. Across 81 service visits and involving all 19 staff throughout 12 open hours, many conversations were facilitated about the unique challenges faced by women and female identifying service users within the drug using community; from domestic violence and criminalisation through to motherhood, trauma, sex-work/health and generalised health, among other things. Posters, pens, stickers, wallet cards and handouts, all containing information about local services that offer targeted support for women, were distributed and orange t-shirts were provided and worn. Referrals were made to various related services.



## PORTUGAL, CASO and GAT



In Portugal, two organizations (GAT and CASO) participated in the campaign in the cities of Lisbon and Porto.

CASO organized 2 action days involving WUD where [cartoons](#) were used to represent six examples of types of physical, psychological and economic violence experienced by WUD: violence from police, domestic violence, workplace discrimination, masculinised services design, stigmatization of mothers who use drugs, and the vulnerable situations of homeless women. A second meet allowed participating women to debate, reflect and share experiences and tips for surviving conflict situations. During the two meetings, harm reductions commodities were also distributed.

Under the title 'SisterWUD Campaign', GAT conducted 3 Lisbon meetings with women who use drugs including trans women, sex workers, homeless women and single mothers. The meetings are being developed into a sustained participative collaborative, open to the proposals of all WUD who wish to foster the 'femdrug' movement in Portugal. Goals include provision of an organic space based on intersectional feminism, human rights and harm reduction; exchange on survival experiences (documenting with qualitative descriptions and audio-visual accounts); mutual support; connection with health and social services; and training in advocacy for the rights of women who use drugs. A short film was produced on WUD surviving violence, focussed on those involved in sex work, which was screened on International Human Rights Day where guests also spoke of the rights of homeless women, aspirations, the limits of decriminalization and some experiences which were shared in first person. International campaign posters were displayed at shelters for homeless women and distributed through the Mobile Van for Safer Consumption.

## Australia, CAHMA



A parallel set of activities were conducted:

1. [The Orange Room](#) - a special room within the CAHMA drop-in space designated to be "free from violence safe place" with the purpose not only to symbolize a refuge from violence but also a passage to a new life, space for self-exploration, self-expression and positive changes. Women used the room to meditate, relax, rest, self-express in artistic ways (painting, collage, storytelling or [knitting orange scarves](#) to [wrap the trees](#) at the end of the campaign).

2. A series of specific one-off activities such as: [naloxone training](#), [empowerment and self-esteem workshop](#), [afternoon tea](#), domestic awareness session, [Collage Art Therapy](#) etc. many of which were organised in partnerships with other Canberra alcohol and other drug/harm reduction services. The campaign ended with the [Orange march](#) and community event with a [BBQ](#), [yarn bombing trees](#) and a [self-defence class](#) organised by community members.

The campaign had a strong presence in [social media](#) (on every day of the campaign calls-to-action and campaign photos were shared) and in CAHMA's radio show [News From The Drug War Front](#).

One of the participants of the CAHMA Orange art room made a video with his artwork "[Orange Lady](#)" promoting the campaign.



## Italy, Chemical Sisters



Chemical Sisters kicked off on November 25 with [social media](#) on the campaign. Collaborating with another agency, a physical space was secured for the distribution of harm reduction commodities and information about the women and the use of substances. This has resulted in agreement that in order to meet demand, these actions should take place more frequently together with specific counseling services for women who use drugs.

A [webinar](#) was organized in which the history and aims of the collective 'Chemical Sisters' and the 16-day campaign of actions were described. A possible collaboration (with an association that deals with violence against women in prison systems, also active in activities against violence against women) arose from this interview. The campaign has had a strong impact in raising awareness among active services of violence against women who use drugs in Italy.

## Myanmar, DPAG



In Myanmar, DPAG instituted a social media campaign calling on partner agencies to collaborate to eliminate violence against women who use drugs. See for example, this [video](#) and the following extract:

*Mingalarbar. My name is Nang Pann Ei Kham and I am the coordinator of DPAG (drug policy action group). Together with our members and partners, we advocate for drug policy reform in Myanmar in accordance with health, development and human rights standards.*

*This week we are participating in an international campaign on the elimination of violence against women. We will organize the 16-day campaign from November 25 until December 10 (Human Rights Day). We will closely collaborate with partners such as women who use drugs, female sex workers, women living with HIV, youths, LGBTQ+ and ethnic women.*

*As women we have encountered any physical, mental or sexual violence at least once in our lives. Likewise, women who use drugs are suffering from violence in their everyday lives. They need support in terms of health, socioeconomic and legal protection.*

*Today, I call to "stop violence against women who use drugs". Please show them your empathy. Thank you.*

## POLAND, PoliNPUD



PoliNPUD (the Polish drug user organisation) conducted outreach especially focusing on women during the campaign, with a party for women at the drop-in center in early December. Social media was used to promote the campaign, and a podcast, talking about EVAWUD and PoliNPUD, was completed. [Meetings were held with women who use drugs](#) and this campaign indirectly assisted with strengthening drug user organising in Poland .



Thank you to all the organisations and groups participating in this growing global campaign and sharing this report. WHRIN will continue to expose systemic drivers of violence against women who use drugs, advocating for comprehensive gender sensitive harm reduction services along with drug law reform.

LUNEDÌ 7 DICEMBRE 2020  
ORE 17,30

**STOP  
ALLA VIOLENZA  
CONTRO LE DONNE  
CHE USANO SOSTANZE**

SOME WOMEN USE DRUGS,  
NO WOMEN NEED VIOLENCE.  
STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST  
WOMEN WHO USE DRUGS.

DAL 25 NOVEMBRE AL 10 DICEMBRE 2020 È STATA  
LANCIATA UNA CAMPAGNA INTERNAZIONALE DI 16 GIORNI  
DI AZIONE PER L'ELIMINAZIONE DELLA VIOLENZA SULLE  
DONNE CHE USANO SOSTANZE. UN PROGETTO CHE INCLUDE  
REALTÀ DA GRAN PARTE DELL'EUROPA NATO DALLA  
COLLABORAZIONE DI EUROPLUD E WHRIN.

Media Partner:  
FUORI!

REGISTRATI SU GOTOONLINE E INVALLE ORE 17.30  
[HTTPS://GLOBAL.GOTOMEETINGS.COM/JOIN/555725677](https://global.gotomeetings.com/join/555725677)

Κι αν παίρνουμε ουσίες  
δεν παίρνουμε από βία



16 Days of Action

Stop the WAR on  
**WOMEN**  
who use Drugs!

#WHRINNetwork

2511 - 1812  
ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΣΜΟΣ

ΣΤΗ ΤΗΝ  
ΕΞΑΓΩΓΗ ΤΗΣ ΒΙΑΣ  
ΠΡΟΣ ΤΙΣ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΕΣ  
ΠΟΥ ΠΑΙΡΝΟΥΝ ΝΑΡΚΩΤΙΚΑ

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